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Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Sweet peppers

Submitted by the secretariat

The following document is submitted to the Working Party for adoption as the revised UNECE Standard for Sweet Peppers. It is prepared according to ECE/CTCS/2017/10 section II c and ECE/CTCS/2018/2 section VII a.

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I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to sweet peppers of varieties[1] (cultivars) grown from *Capsicum annuum* L. to be supplied fresh to the consumer, sweet peppers for industrial processing being excluded.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for sweet peppers after preparation and packaging.

However, if applied at stages following export, products may show in relation to the requirements of the standard:

- a slight lack of freshness and turgidity;
- for products graded in classes other than the "Extra" Class, a slight deterioration due to their development and their tendency to perish.

The holder/seller of products may not display such products or offer them for sale, or deliver or market them in any manner other than in conformity with this standard. The holder/seller shall be responsible for observing such conformity.

A. Minimum requirements

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the sweet peppers must be:

- intact
- sound; produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter
- fresh in appearance
- firm
- practically free from pests
- free from damage caused by pests affecting the flesh
- free of damage caused by low temperature or frost
- with peduncles attached; the peduncle must be neatly cut and the calyx be intact
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

The development and condition of the sweet peppers must be such as to enable them:

- to withstand transportation and handling
- to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.

B. Classification

Sweet peppers are classified in three classes, as defined below:

[1] Some of the sweet pepper varieties may have a slightly hot taste. Examples of commercial varieties of sweet peppers having a slightly hot taste are Sivri and Padron.

(i) "Extra" Class

Sweet peppers in this class must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type.

They must be free from defects, with the exception of very slight superficial defects, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package.

(ii) Class I

Sweet peppers in this class must be of good quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type.

The following slight defects, however, may be allowed, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package:

- a slight defect in shape
- slight silvering or damage caused by thrips covering not more than 1/3 of the total surface area
- slight skin defects, such as:
    - pitting, scratching, sunburn, pressure marks covering in total not more than 2cm for defects of elongated shape, and 1cm^2 for other defects; or
    - dry superficial cracks covering in total not more than 1/8 of the total surface area
- slightly damaged peduncle.

(iii) Class II

This class includes sweet peppers that do not qualify for inclusion in the higher classes but satisfy the minimum requirements specified above.

The following defects may be allowed provided the sweet peppers retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation:

- defects in shape
- silvering or damage caused by thrips covering not more than 2/3 of the total surface area
- skin defects, such as:
    - pitting, scratching, sunburn, bruising, and healed injuries covering in total not more than 4 cm in length for defects of elongated shape and 2.5 cm^2 of the total area for other defects; or
    - dry superficial cracks covering in total not more than 1/4 of the total surface area
- blossom end deterioration not more than 1 cm^2
- shrivelling not exceeding 1/3 of the surface
- damaged peduncle and calyx, provided the surrounding flesh remains intact.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

Size is determined by the maximum equatorial diameter or by weight.

To ensure uniformity in size, the range in size between produce in the same package shall not exceed:

(a) For sweet peppers sized by diameter:

- 20 mm.

(b) For sweet peppers sized by weight:

- 30 g where the heaviest piece weighs 180 g or less
- 80 g where the lightest piece weighs more than 180 g but less than 260 g
- no limit where the lightest piece weighs 260 g or more

Elongated sweet peppers should be sufficiently uniform in length.

Uniformity in size is not compulsory for Class II.

IV. Provisions concerning tolerances

At all marketing stages, tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each lot for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated.

A. Quality tolerances

(i) "Extra" Class

A total tolerance of 5 per cent, by number or weight, of sweet peppers not satisfying the requirements of the class but meeting those of Class I is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 0.5 per cent in total may consist of produce satisfying the requirements of Class II quality.

(ii) Class I

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of sweet peppers not satisfying the requirements of the class but meeting those of Class II is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 1 per cent in total may consist of produce satisfying neither the requirements of Class II quality nor the minimum requirements or of produce affected by decay.

(iii) Class II

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of sweet peppers satisfying neither the requirements of the class nor the minimum requirements is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 2 per cent in total may consist of produce affected by decay.

B. Size tolerances

For all classes (if sized): a total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of sweet peppers not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing is allowed.

V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only sweet peppers of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality and size (if sized) and, in the case of Classes "Extra" and I, of appreciably the same degree of ripeness and colouring.

However, a mixture of sweet peppers of distinctly different colours and/or commercial types may be packed together in a package, provided they are uniform in quality and, for each commercial type and/or colour concerned, in origin. However, in case of those mixtures uniformity in size is not required.

The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents.

B. Packaging

The sweet peppers must be packed in such a way as to protect the produce properly.

The materials used inside the package must be clean and of a quality such as to avoid causing any external or internal damage to the produce. The use of materials, particularly paper or stamps bearing trade specifications, is allowed, provided the printing or labelling has been done with non-toxic ink or glue.

Stickers individually affixed to the produce shall be such that, when removed, they neither leave visible traces of glue, nor lead to skin defects. Information lasered on single fruit should not lead to flesh or skin defects.

Packages must be free of all foreign matter.

VI. Provisions concerning marking

Each package[2] must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside:

A. Identification

Packer and/or dispatcher/exporter:

Name and physical address (e.g. street/city/region/postal code and, if different from the country of origin, the country) or a code mark officially recognized by the national authority[3] if the country applying such a system is listed in the UNECE database.

B. Nature of produce

- "Sweet peppers", if the contents are not visible from the outside
- "Mixture of sweet peppers", or equivalent denomination, in the case of a mixture of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours of sweet peppers. If the produce is not visible from the outside, the commercial types and/or colours and the quantity of each in the package must be indicated.

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin[4] and, optionally, district where grown or national, regional or local place name
- In the case of a mixture of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours of sweet peppers of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the commercial type and/or colour concerned.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class

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[2] These marking provisions do not apply to sales packages presented in packages. However, they do apply to sales packages (pre-packages) presented individually.

[3] The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in the case where a code mark is used, the reference "packer and/or dispatcher (or equivalent abbreviations)" has to be indicated in close connection with the code mark, and the code mark should be preceded by the ISO 3166 (alpha) country/area code of the recognizing country, if not the country of origin.

[4] The full or a commonly used name should be indicated.

- Size (if sized) expressed as minimum and maximum diameters or minimum and maximum weight
- Number of units (optional)
- "(Name of type or variety) may have a slightly hot taste"or equivalent information, where appropriate.

E. Official control mark (optional)

Adopted 1969

Last revised 2018

Aligned with the Standard Layout 2017

The UNECE has published an explanatory illustrated brochure on the application of this standard. The publication may be obtained from the UNECE at:
www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm